

By Donald Piscitelli

First, I'd like to say Happy March as we move toward the start of Spring. I would also like to say; I hope your Lenten season thus far has been a blessing for you and your loved ones. I'm not sure this will count as a reflection or more as unresolved thoughts running through my mind, looking for an answer. March besides spring also brings two more celebrated days St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's holidays. So, let's dig in. First let's dispel the most common beliefs about St. Patrick. He never drove the snakes out of Ireland, nor did he ever see a snake in Ireland. This is because archaeological records show there have never been any snakes in Ireland, science believes this was because of the ice age. Second there is no evidence that he ever taught the trinity using a three-leaf clover. Lastly and most important that he was Irish. He was born in what was considered Roman Britain of a wealthy Christian family. He was kidnapped at the age of 16 by Irish Pirates and brought to Ireland where he slaved as a Shepard. After 6 years he escaped and returned to Britain. After being ordained he traveled back to Ireland where he spent the next 40 years converting the Irish people to Christianity. Initially the feast of St. Patrick was celebrated with a religious ceremony and a feast. St. Patrick's Day was only added to the church calendar in the early 1600's. It wasn't until 1903 that St. Patrick's Day became a National holiday in Ireland. Most of what we know as St. Patrick's Day celebrations were American born. I'll let you in on a little known secret, that the makers of Guinness would never tell

you, but it was illegal to sell alcohol in Ireland on St. Patrick's Day until 1961. Another little-known fact, but St. Patrick was never canonized. This is simply due to the era that he lived in. During the first millennium, there was no formal canonization process in the Catholic Church, and all the titles were all bestowed locally. Two days after St. Patrick's Day is St. Joseph's Day. St. Joseph, as you know was the husband of our Holy Mother, and the earthly father to our Lord Jesus. The Catholic encyclopedia states the following date are apocryphal, meaning that they are purported to be true by way of repeated telling but have never been proven or verified. That being the case they have St. Joseph being born in 90 BC and his death as July 20, 18. We know he was a working man, a carpenter, and he wasn't very rich. This is known because in Luke it is said that when he presented Jesus to be circumcised and Mary to be purified, he offered the sacrifice of two turtle doves, this was allowed only for those that could not afford a lamb. Interesting since we know he was descended from Royal lineage he was descended from David, the greatest king of Israel. St. Joseph was also the only saint I could find that had 2 feast days associated with him in the Catholic calendar March 19 for St. Joseph as spouse to the blessed mother, and in 1955 Pope Pius XII established St. Joseph the Worker on May first.

These are the facts as I know them, now as you reflect on them if you figure out why one is more celebrated than the other, please enlighten me, because I can't figure it out.